

Sheltering & Temporary Essential Power (STEP) Pilot Program

Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTIONS FROM HOMEOWNERS

Q: What is STEP?

A: The Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power (STEP) program provides limited power, heat and hot water by funding certain measures for residences.

- STEP can help residences shelter-in-place while they make repairs to their homes.
- STEP may repair the electric meter.
- STEP may provide limited power, heat and/or hot water for basic life sustaining needs.
- STEP may assist with temporary exterior repairs such as broken windows, covering damaged exterior walls and roofs, and patching and securing damaged exterior doors.
- STEP may include temporary repairs to ramps and other related construction elements needed to make the home accessible for residents with disabilities and others with physical accommodation requirements.

Q: How do I get information about this program?

A: Contact your local government to apply.

Q: How do I get STEP?

A: Your local government will decide what elements of the STEP Program are available for your community. You can contact them for more information.

Q: As a resident or homeowner, how do I apply for STEP?

A: You will need to:

1. Contact your local government.
2. Submit Right of Entry (ROE) completed and signed by the homeowner.
3. You must make yourself available or have a representative over the age of 18 present at the time of the assessment by local officials.
4. Provide proof of ownership (e.g. deed, tax bill, mortgage note).

Q: If my local government has approved the STEP program can I choose not to participate?

A: Yes. We encourage you to participate in the program since there is no cost to you; however you are not obligated to participate in the STEP program.

Q: Is debris removal from my property covered under the STEP program?

A: No. Debris removal is not included under STEP assistance. If you still have debris on your property a voluntary agency may be able to assist.

Q: How long will it take for the repairs to be done on my property?

A: All repairs done through STEP must be completed within 60 days of a signed ROE.

Q: Will the STEP repairs to my home have warranty coverage?

A: No. Repairs done through STEP will not have warranty coverage.

Q: I had my electric/gas meter replaced due to the damage it suffered from Hurricane Sandy. May I be reimbursed?

A: No. STEP is not a reimbursement program for individuals.

Q: Will I be able to apply for any other FEMA Individual assistance programs if I choose to participate in STEP?

A: Yes. Anyone who was impacted by Hurricane Sandy is urged to register for assistance through FEMA by calling 1-800-621-FEMA or going to www.disasterassistance.gov.

Q: If I have already reached the FEMA maximum grant award of \$31,900, am I still able to participate in STEP?

A: Yes. Residences who have received the maximum grant award from FEMA are eligible to register for STEP.

Q: If FEMA denied me for assistance, can I still register for STEP?

A: Yes. You can still apply for STEP.

Q: Does homeowners insurance disqualify you for STEP?

A: No. You can still apply for STEP.

Q: If your residence is a boat are you eligible for STEP?

A: This would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Q: Are residents receiving a check, contracted services or a combination of the two? What decides that?

A: Residents will not receive a check for the services. The local government will be reimbursed for services provided.

Q: Is \$10,000 the maximum amount available for a residential unit? What is the process for determining a resident's eligibility? Does the county decide what repairs are made or does the survivor have a say?

A: The \$10,000 is not a guaranteed sum but a "not to exceed" amount for qualifying repairs. The local government will decide what elements of the STEP program will be provided.

Q: What identification will contractors have?

A: This is a program that is managed by the local government and they will provide identification that they deem appropriate.

QUESTIONS FROM CONTRACTORS

Q: If there is a lack of supply of inventory such as 20 gallon hot water heaters is it reasonable to install a higher gallon?

A: The local government will be reimbursed for up to a 20 gallon unit.

Q: Can extra circuits be added for appliance such as stove and fridges?

A: No. Repair teams will install up to four 120 volt devices (plugs) in locations they determine are necessary.

Q: Construction workers during the assessment phase encounter mold or soaked rooms. Does that disqualify a household for STEP?

A: Mold does not disqualify a residence from receiving STEP repairs. Standing water may have an impact because of safety concerns; however assistance may be provided at the discretion of the home inspector.

###